

## TALMAGE.

## An Interesting Discourse on the Merits of Awkward Usefulness.

The Good Results Wrought Out by "Left-Handed" Men—Death in the Summer-Time of Life.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., March 29.—Dr. Talmage preached this evening in the Brooklyn Tabernacle on the subject, "Awkward Usefulness." When by electric touch the 1,500 lights of the tabernacle flash up, the auditorium affords a brilliant scene not to be forgotten. The aisles and the corridors and the entrances of the church are thronged. The opening hymn at this evening's services was:

My soul, be on thy guard!  
Ten thousand foes arise;  
The hosts of sin are pressing hard!  
To draw thee from the skies.

The text was from Judges iii., 15.

"But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord sent them up a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjaminite, a man left-handed, and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon, the King of Moab."

Dr. Talmage said: Ehud was a ruler in Israel. He was left-handed, and what was peculiar about the tribe of Benjamin, to which he belonged, there were in it 700 left-handed men, and yet so dexterous had they all become in the use of the left hand that the Bible says they could sling stones at a hair's breadth and no miss.

Well, there was a King by the name of Eglon, who was an oppressor of Israel. He imposed upon them a most outrageous tax. Ehud, the man of whom I first spoke, had a divine commission to destroy that oppressor. He came, pretending that he was going to pay the tax, and asked to see King Eglon. He was told he was in the summer-house, the place to which the King retired when it was too hot to sit in the palace. This summer-house was a place surrounded by flowers and trees and springing fountains and warbling birds. Ehud entered the summer-house, and said to King Eglon that he had a secret errand with him. Immediately all the attendants went out of the room, and the King Eglon rises up to receive the messenger. Ehud, the left-handed man, puts his left hand to his right side, pulls out a dagger and thrusts Eglon through until the haft went in after the blade. Eglon falls. Ehud comes forth to blow the trumpet of right and of the mountains of Ephraim, and a great host is marshaled, and proud Moab submits to the conqueror, and Israel is free. So, oh! Lord, let all thine enemies perish; so, oh! Lord, let all thy friends triumph!

I learn first from this subject the power of left-handed men. There are some men who by physical organization have as much strength in their left hand as in their right hand, but there is something in the writing of this text which implies that Ehud had some defect in his right hand which compelled him to use the left. Oh, the power of left-handed men! Genius is often self-observant, careful of itself, not given to much toil, burning incense to its own aggrandizement; while many a man with no natural endowments, actually deficient in physical and mental organization, has an earnestness for the rights of patient industry, an all-consuming perseverance, which achieves marvels for the kingdom of Christ. Though left-handed as Ehud, they can strike down a sin as great and as colossal as Eglon. I have seen men of wealth gathering about them all their treasures, snuffing at the cause of a world lying in wickedness, roughly ordering Lazarus off their doorstep, sending their dogs not to lick his sores, but to bound him off their premises; catching all the pure rain of God's blessing into the stagnant, roty, frog-inhabited pool of their own selfishness—right-handed men worse than useless—while many a man with large heart and little pulse has out of his limited means made poverty leap for joy and started on industries that over-span the grave and will swing round and round the throne of God, world without end; amen. Ah, me, it is high time that you left-handed men who have been trying for this gift and that elegance and the other man's wealth should take your left hand out of your pockets. Who made all these railroads? Who set up all these cities? Who started all these churches and schools and asylums? Who has done the tagging and running and pulling? Men of no wonderful endowments, thousands of them acknowledging themselves to be left-handed, and yet they were earnest and yet they were determined and yet they were triumphant. But I do not suppose that Ehud, the first time he took a thing in his right hand, could throw a stone a hair's breadth and no miss. I suppose it was practice that gave him the wonderful dexterity. Go forth to your spheres of duty and be not discouraged if in your first attempt you miss the mark. Ehud missed it. Take another stone, put it carefully into the sling, swing it around your head, take better aim, and the next time you will strike the center. The first time a man rings his trowel upon the brick, he does not expect to put up a perfect wall. The first time an carpenter sands a plane with a board or drives a bit through a beam he does not expect to make perfect execution. The first time a boy attempts a rhyme he does not expect to rhyme a "Lalla Rookh" or a "Lady of the Lake." Do not be surprised if in your efforts at doing good you are not very largely successful. Understand that usefulness is an art, a science, a trade. There was an oculist performing a very difficult operation on the human eye. A young doctor stood by and said: "How easily you do that; it doesn't seem to cause you any trouble at all." "Ah," said the oculist, "it is very easy now, but I spoiled a handful of eyes to learn that." Be not surprised if it takes some practice before we can help men to moral eyesight and bring them to a vision of the cross. Left-handed men to the work; take the gospel for a sling, and faith and repentance for the smooth stone from the brook; take sure aim, God direct the weapon and great Goliaths will tremble before you. When Garibaldi was going out to battle he told his troops what he wanted them to do and after he had described what he wanted them to do they said:

"Well, General, what are you going to give us for all this?" "Well," he replied, "I don't know what else you will get, but you will get hunger and cold and wounds and death. How do you like it?" His men stood before him for a little while in silence and then they threw up their hands and cried: "We are the men! We are the men!" The Lord Jesus Christ called you to his service. I do not promise you an easy time in the world. You may have persecutions and trials and misrepresentations; but afterward there comes an eternal weight of glory, and can bear the wounds and the bruises and the misrepresentations if you can have the reward afterward. Have you

not enough enthusiasm to cry out: "We are the men! We are the men!"

I learn also from this subject the danger of worldly elevation. This Eglon was what the world called a great man. There were hundreds of people who would have considered it the greatest honor of their life just to have him to speak to them. Yet although he is not beyond the reach of Ehud's dagger, I see a great many people trying to climb up in social position, having and ideas that there is a safe place somewhere far above, not knowing that the mountain of fame has a top like Mount Blanc, covered with perpetual snow. We laugh at the children of Shinar for trying to build a tower that could reach to the heavens but I think if our eyesight were only good enough we could see a Babel in many a door-yard. Oh, the struggle is fierce. It is store against store, house against house, street against street, nation against nation. The goal for which men are running is chairs and chandeliers and mirrors and house-lands and Presidential equipments. If they get what they anticipate, what have they got? Men are not safe from calumny while they live, and, worse than that, they are not safe after they are dead; for I have seen swine root up grave-yards. One day a man goes up into publicity and the world does him honor and people climb up into sycamore trees to watch him as he passes, and as he goes along on the shoulders of the people there is a waving of hats and a wild hurra. To-morrow the same man is caught between the jaws of the printing press and mangled and bruised, and the very same persons who applauded him before cry: "Down with the traitor! Down with him!"

Belshazzar sits at the feast, the mighty men of Babylon sitting all around him. Wit sparkles like the wine and the wine like the wit. Music rolls up among the chandeliers; the chandeliers flash down on the dancers. The breath of hanging gardens floats in on the night air; the voice of lovely floats out. Amidst wreaths and tapers and golden banners a finger writes. The march of a host is heard on the stairs. Laughter catches in the throat. A thousand hearts stop beating. The blow is struck. The blood on the floor is richer than the wine on the table. The kingdom has departed. Belshazzar was no worse, perhaps, than hundreds of people in Babylon, but his position slew him. Oh, be content with just such a position as God has placed you in. It may not be said of you, "He was a great general," or "he was an honored chief-tain," or he was mighty in worldly attainments; but this thing may be said of you and of me: "He was a good citizen, a faithful Christian, a friend of Jesus; and that in the last day, will be the highest of all attainments."

I learn farther from the subject that death comes to the summer-house. Ehud did not expect to die in that fine place. Amidst all the flower leaves that drifted like summer snow into the window, in the pinkie and the white of the hand in the sound of the thousand leaves duttering on the tree-branches, in the cool breeze that came up to shake feverish trouble out of the king's locks—there was nothing that spoke of death, but there he died! In the winter, when the snow is about the house and the wind is a dive, it is easy to think of our mortality, but when the weather is pleasant and all our surroundings are agreeable, how difficult it is for us to appreciate the truth that we are mortal! And yet my text teaches that death does sometimes come to the summer-house. He is blind and can not see the leaves. He is deaf and can not hear the fountains. Oh, if death would ask us for victims, we could point him to hundreds of people who would rejoice to have him come. Push back the door, that hovel. Look at that little child—cold and sick and hungry. He has never heard the name of God but in blasphemy. Parents intoxicated, staggering around in a straw bed. O death, there is a mark for thee? Up with it into the light! Before these little feet stumble on life's pathway, give them rest.

There is an aged man. He has done his work. He has done it gloriously. The companions of his youth all gone, his children dead, he long to be at rest, and wearily the daygoes and the nights pass. He says: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." O death, there is a mark for thee! Take from him the staff and give him the scepter; up with him into the light where eyes never grow dim and the hair whitens not through the long years of eternity. Ah, death will not do that! Death turns back from the straw bed and from the aged man ready for the skies, and comes to the summer-house. What does thou here, thou bony, ghastly monster, amidst this warm green and under this sunlight sitting through the tree branches? Children are at play. How quickly their feet go and their looks turn in the wind. Father and mother stand at the side of the room enjoying their sleep. It does not seem possible that the world should ever break into that fold and carry off a lamb. Meanwhile an old archer stands looking through the thicket. He points his arrow at the brightest of the group. He is a sure marksman. The boy bends, the arrow speeds! Hush now. The quick feet have stopped and the locks toss no more in the wind. Laughter has gone out of the hall. Death in the summer-house!

Here is a father in midlife; his coming home at night is the signal for mirth. The children rush to the door, and there are books on the evening stand and the hours pass away on glad feet. There is nothing wanting in that house. Religion is there and sacrifices on the altar morning and night. You look in that household and say: "I can not think of anything happier. I do not really believe the world is so sad a place as some people describe it to be." The scene changes. Father is sick. The doors must be kept shut. The death watch chirps dolefully on the hearth. The children whisper and walk and waiters come they ransack. Passing the house late at night you see the quick glancing of lights from room to room. It is all over. Death in the summer-house! Here is an aged mother—aged but not infirm. You think you will have the joy of caring for her wants a good while yet. As she goes from house to house, to children and grandchildren, her coming is a dropping of sunlight in the dwelling. Your children see her coming through the lane, and they cry "grandmother's come!" Care for you that is marked up her face with many a deep wrinkle, and her back stoops with carrying your burdens. Some day she is very quiet; she says she is not sick, but something tells you you will not much longer have a mother. She will sit with you no more at the table nor at the hearth. Her soul goes out to greet you do not know exactly the moment of its going. Fold the hands that have done so many kindnesses for you right over the heart that has beat with love toward you since before you were born. Let the pilgrim rest. She is weary. Death in the summer-house.

Gather about us what we will of comfort and luxury when the pale messenger comes he does not stop to look at the architecture of the house before he comes in; nor, entering, does he begin examining the pictures and the hangings on the wall, or bending over your pillow, he does not stop to see whether there is color in the cheek, or gentleness in the eye, or intelligence in the brow. But what else? Must we stand forever mourning among the graves of our dead? No! The people in Bengal bring cages of birds to the graves of their dead and then they open the cages and the birds go singing heavenward. So I would bring to the graves of your dead to-night all bright thoughts and calculations and bid them sing

of victory and redemption. I stamp on the bottom of the grave and it breaks through into the light and the glory of heaven.

The ancients used to think that the straits entering the Red Sea were very dangerous places, and they supposed that every ship that went through those straits would be destroyed, and they were in the habit of putting on weeds of mourning for those who had gone on that voyage as though they were actually dead. Do you know what they called those straits? They called them the "Gate of Tears." Oh, I stand to-night at the gate of tears through which many of your loved ones have gone, and I want to tell you that all are not shipwrecked that have gone through those straits to the great ocean stretching out beyond. The sound that comes from that other shore on still nights when we are wrapped in prayer makes me think they are not dead. We are the dead—we who toll; we who weep; we who say, "We are the dead. How my heart aches for human sorrow! This sound of breaking hearts that I hear all about me! This last look of faces that never will brighten again! This last kiss of lips that will never speak again! This widowhood of orphanage! Oh, when will the day of sorrow be gone!"

After the sharpest winter, the spring dismounts from the shoulder a southern gale and puts its warm hand upon the earth, and in the same way comes the grand and the come the flowers, and God reads over the poetry of bird and book and bloom and pronounces it very good. What, my friends, if every winter had not its spring and every night its day, and every gloom its glow, and every bitter now its sweet hereafter? If you have been on the sea, you know the high passes in the night there is a phosphorescent track left behind it; and as the waters roll up you tuss with unimagined splendor. Well, across this great ocean of human trouble Jesus walks. Oh, that in the phosphorescence of a frame his feet we might all follow and be illumined!

There was a gentleman in a rail car who saw in that car three passengers of very different circumstances. The first was a woman, and she was grandly dressed, her attendants, his mind, like a ship derailed, was beating against a dark, desolate coast, from which no help could come. The train stopped, and the man was taken out into the asylum to waste away, perhaps through years of gloom. The second passenger was a man, and he was dressed in a simple, plain, and his mind was as clear as a crystal. As the car jolted the chains rattled. On his face were crime and depravity and despair. The train halted and he was taken out to the penitentiary to which he had been sentenced, and he was there to stay. The third passenger was a man, and he was dressed in a simple, plain, and his mind was as clear as a crystal. As the car jolted the chains rattled. On his face were crime and depravity and despair. The train halted and he was taken out to the penitentiary to which he had been sentenced, and he was there to stay.

At the Last.  
How softly through the window comes the air,  
Dear, I breathe the casier. In the street below,  
I hear the sound of carriages; I know  
The day is bright and yet how can they care?  
Like a hushed temple seems the room; more  
Fair.  
In the dim light the children's faces glow,  
Kiss me, and fold your arms around me now—  
In the old way. How strange that I can bear  
The thought of parting! Can it be that this  
Is all we have so doted, and that I  
Lie here untrodden, knowing I must miss  
So soon the warm touch of your hand, and lie  
Unanswered your last, long, lingering kiss?  
O love, dear love, it is not hard to die!  
—Alice Wellington Ellis, in Miss Ince's.

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE AND INCIDENT.

The memorial volume of the late Catholic Plenary Council has been issued.

The line of life is a rugged diagonal between duty and desire.—W. R. Alger.

Bishop Hurst, Methodist, has just left the Suez Canal on his way home from India, and he will soon be in New York.

Thoughtlessness is never an excuse for wrong-doing. Our hasty actions disclose, as nothing else does, our habitual feelings.—J. T. Fields.

In Washington the largest auditorium is that of the Congressional Church, but is not large enough to seat a 1 who wish to hear Rev. S. M. Newman, the new pastor.

The Mohammedans are 123,000,000 in all countries, but even in European Turkey, commonly considered the stronghold of Islam, only one-fourth of the population is Mohammedan.

The Methodist Episcopal Missionary Secretaries ask a "jump sum" of \$1,000,000 for the work of 1885, home and foreign, and as that is only fifty cents per capita of communicants they ought to get it.

There are now only five bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church South living: Bishops McTear, Nashville; Keener, New Orleans; Wilson, Baltimore; Granberry, St. Louis; Hargrove, Atlanta, Ga.

Spurgeon has turned out 668 preachers from his "Pastor's College" in the twenty-eight years it has been established. Spurgeon's theory about learning to preach is "as a dog learns to swim, 'jump' in."

New York City has twenty-eight religious denominations, 300 churches and other places of worship, and about 33,400 church members, representing a population of nearly 400,000. So says City Missionary Jackson.

Daily ought we to renew our purpose, and to stir up ourselves to greater fervor, and to say, "Help me, my God, in this my good purpose and in thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly."

—Thos. A. Kempis.

"Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels reveal themselves to you! They sit all day beside you, and lie down at night by you. Who care not for their presence, and muse or sleep."

And all at once they leave you and you know them.—Brown.

Brown: "I was surprised to see you at church yesterday, Smith. I understood that you didn't believe much in religious matters." Smith: "Well, er—I have been somewhat of an infidel all my life, but the cold that I caught last week has tied on my lungs, and I feel a little nervous about it."

The Baptist Church of Berlin, Germany, was founded in 1857, its present chapel being built in 1860. It has 772 members. In connection with the church are fourteen preaching stations in the neighborhood of Berlin, in four of which are small chapels. The church sustains eight Sunday-schools with about 750 scholars.

Among Christians so much prominence has been given to the disciplinary effects of sorrow, affliction, bereavement, that they have been in danger of overlooking the other and more obvious side that by every joy, by every favor, by every sign of prosperity, yes, and by these chiefly, God designs to educate and discipline his children. This one-sided view of the truth has made many morbid, gloomy Christians, who look for God's hand only in the lightning, and never think of seeing it in the sunlight. They only enjoy themselves when they are miserable.—Rev. F. E. Clark.

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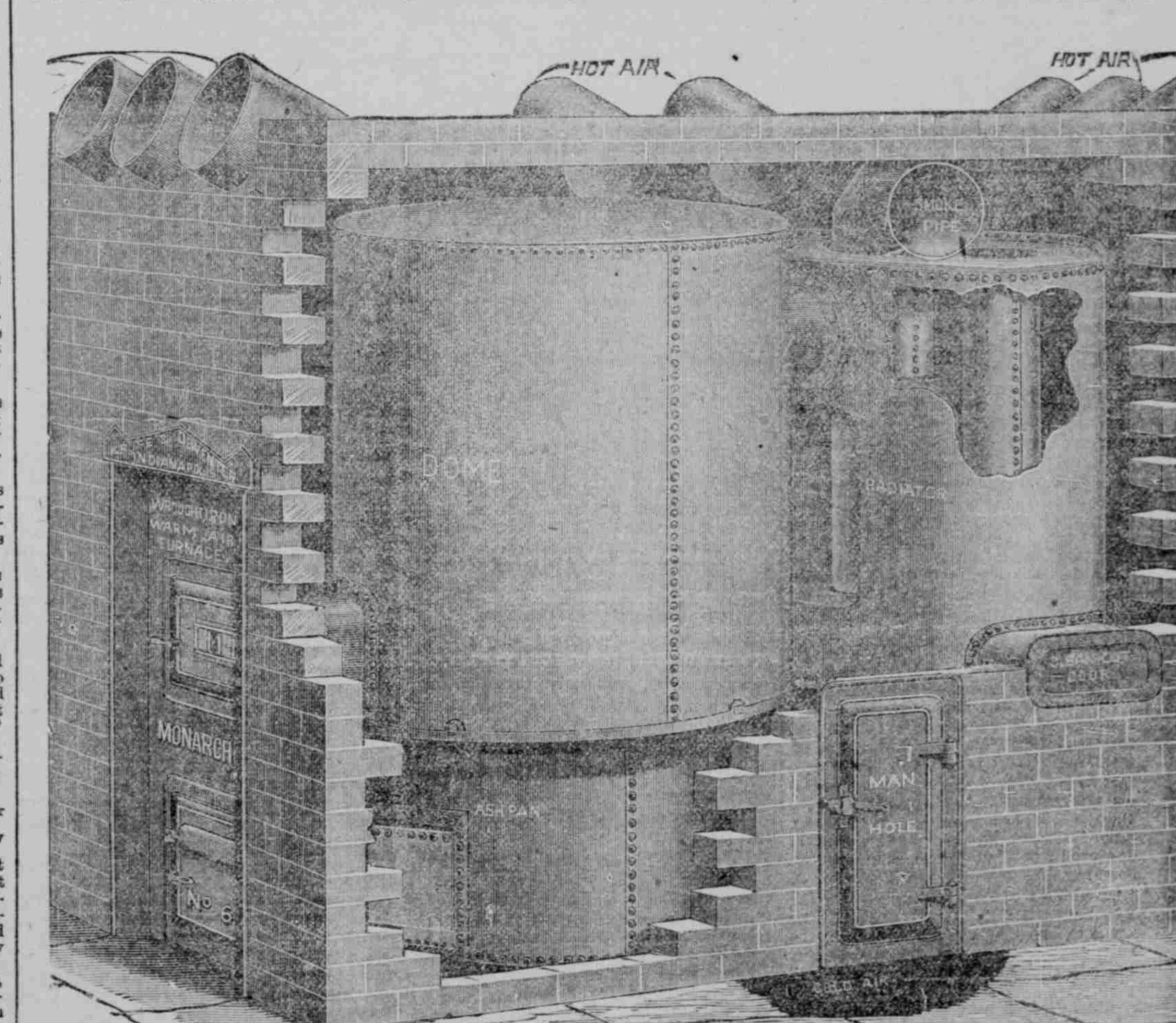
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